



"People Helping People"
Since 1965

Community Progress Council, Inc.

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York County's Community Action Agency

George H. Moore
Executive Director

February 23, 2007

Testimony: Committee on Education and Labor
Subcommittee on Healthy Families and Communities Hearing
"Strengthening Communities; an Overview of Service and Volunteering"
February 27, 2007, 2 pm
2175 Rayburn House Office Building

Thank you, Chairwoman McCarthy, for inviting me to testify before your subcommittee.

Thank you, Rep. Platts, for your caring and committed representation of York County, Pennsylvania.

My name is George Moore. I am the Executive Director of Community Progress Council, Inc., the federally designated Community Action Agency for York County, Pennsylvania.

For eight years we have had the privilege of administering the Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) through a grant from the Corporation for National Community Service. This program has been well received by our board of directors, the agency staff, clients, and the community.

From the FGP volunteers I frequently hear "the program and the children we serve give me a reason to get up everyday." The mutual benefits that the at-risk youth and foster grandparents receive from each other are beyond measure. Children get compassionate one-to-one attention from a caring FGP volunteer. The volunteers have new purpose and meaning in their life. In addition, being physically active has helped lower blood pressure and lessened the effects of disabilities.

Some background on our York County program follows with attached letters about specific Foster Grandparents.

In the best interest of families,

George H. Moore
Executive Director

WIC Program
130 W. Market St., York, PA 17401
Ph: 843-7WIC Fax: 843-9560

Foster Grandparent Program
134 W. Market St., York, PA 17401
Ph: 846-4600 Fax: 846-6785

Case Management
30 E. King St., York, PA 17401
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Since the Foster Grandparent started in York County:

- **132 volunteers (Foster Grandparents) have served**
- **Approximately 375,000 hours**
- **42 volunteers have met and well exceeded the President's challenge by serving over 4,000 hours earning them the "Lifetime" Presidential Volunteer Service Award**

Over the past 12 months:

- **63 volunteers (Foster Grandparents) have served over**
- **58,000 hours serving well over**
- **350 children needing individual attention at**
- **15 sites in York City and County (5 faith-based)**

At the end of the 2005-06 school year elementary teachers reported that of the children assigned to Foster Grandparents:

- **91% of the children demonstrated improvement in reading**
- **92% improved in math skills**
- **94% showed improvement in spelling skills**

At the end of the 2005-06 school year Head Start teachers reported that of the children assigned to Foster Grandparents:

- **82% of the children were at age level for cognitive development; demonstrating a 7% increase since mid-school year**
- **86% were at age level with their social skills which had increased 26% since mid-year**
- **94% of the Head Start children in the mentoring program were prepared to enter Kindergarten in the fall with the skills they would need to be successful**

November 18, 2005

To whom it may concern,

I would like to take this opportunity to praise and give thanks to someone who is greatly cherished at William Penn Senior High School. "Grandma" Sue Atkinson is truly a wonderful person, and we are very lucky to have her as an assistant in our classroom. She brings instant energy to the class the second she walks through the door.

Her responsibilities involve many areas. She provides one on one instruction with individual students. She gives guidance and helps to develop self confidence in our students. She discusses decision making, to help the students understand the consequences of the choices that they make. She constantly supports the leadership and authoritative role of the teacher. She provides the students with compassion and sincerity, while promoting a strong sense of discipline. With Grandma Sue, there is a constant in the students' lives, which they look forward to having each and every day. The classroom itself is comprised of a large number of "street tough" students. It is not an easy environment to deal with on a daily basis. However, Grandma Sue's dedication to the students is vital in their emotional growth.

Again, I am extremely thankful to have Grandma Sue as a part of our classroom at William Penn. Not only am I thankful, the students are thankful as well. We are very lucky to have her with us. She adds many characteristics to the classroom and she is cherished greatly.

Sincerely,



Joe Opalenick
Emotional Support Teacher
William Penn Senior High School

To Whom It May Concern:

We feel very fortunate to have Miss Ella Ellis as a foster grandparent in our Multiple Disabilities Support Classroom. She is a very congenial, likeable person, who gets along well with staff and students alike.

Our classroom is not unlike a family, given the amount of time we spend together. Our students are severely disabled and are totally dependent on each of us and we play a major role in their lives. Many of their very basic needs, such as feeding and bathrooming are attended to in the classroom. In addition to these needs, the students benefit from a positive lighthearted atmosphere, that we try to maintain spite of some depressing situations. Our children enjoy laughter, music, walks and an upbeat atmosphere. Miss Ella (Ellis) adds to this positive environment with her good nature, kind spirit and helpful heart. She aids in feeding, reading to, and helping to bathe students.

Miss Ella is a kind of "grandma" to all of us in spirit. We feel very lucky to know her and feel that she is a true asset to our classroom.

Sincerely,

Roy C. Oerman
MDS Teacher
Wm Penn SHS

All too often, children in an alternative educational setting become second thoughts, but not to Miss Ida. Miss Ida Tarrant graciously donates her time and heart to these students. She comes back year after year to VOLUNTEER her time with the very students many consider not appropriate for our public schools. Miss Ida serves at River Rock Academy, an alternative secondary school. The mission of River Rock is to develop and provide quality and innovative services to people with psychosocial, educational and vocational needs, creating an enhanced quality of life and social responsibility. At-risk school students between the ages of 11-18 years are referred by public school districts to receive these special services. Despite health issues, Miss Ida has served in this capacity for seven years, logging an average of 35 hours per week.

It takes someone special to work with this population; a population that most would consider too challenging. She develops strong relationships with all of the students. She willingly assists with the behavioral problems that the students may exhibit. She is supportive and friendly not only to students but also to the staff. Miss Ida has the ability to make each student

feel special and motivates them to do their best. She is a generous, caring woman who helps out in any way she can. To some of her students, she has truly lived up to the title of “Foster Grandparent” by filling the void of an emotionally or physically missing grandparent. She shares in the pride felt by family at graduations...graduations most felt would never happen.

One student summed up the feelings of many with the following; “Miss Ida is a very nice and caring lady. She loves to keep the kids happy. Everybody appreciates her for all her help. She always tries to make things good and when something’s going wrong she always tries to make it better. We all love Miss Ida.” Staff at River Rock wrote; “We are extremely lucky to have her with us to work with our students. Without her, there would be such a huge void. She has positively affected the lives of all of our children We are proud to have her at River Rock!”



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS
<http://www.pde.state.pa.us/k12>
333 MARKET STREET
HARRISBURG, PA 17126-0333

*U.S. given to
G. Buchanan*

December 20, 2002

Mr. Carlos M. Lopez
Superintendent
York City School District
P. O. Box 1927
York, PA 17405-1927

Via Fax

Dear Mr. Lopez: *Carlos,*

The No Child Left Behind Law (NCLB) is new and emphasizes the importance of paraprofessionals. Everyone has a sharp interest in paraprofessionals (tutors). One of these persons who has a sharp interest in paraprofessionals (tutors) is my wife, Sam Sheffer, who teaches kindergarten at McKinley Elementary.

From the day this law was passed, Sam continually reminds me of the importance of the Community Progress Council's Foster Grandparents Program. This program is important because of grandparents like Geraline Buchanan.

Ms. Buchanan is on time, works hard, and helps the kindergarten children. Geraline is committed to each child's learning. Sam tells me many times a week how invaluable and important Geraline is to the students and to her. Geraline can be proud of what she does for children, and the Community Progress Council should be proud of this program that helps the teachers and children with grandparents like Geraline.

Sincerely,

Jim M. Sheffer
Division Chief

FOSTER GRANDPARENT GRANDMA CYNTHIA
IN HEAD START OF YORK COUNTY CLASSROOM

